

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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PASS NOAA/COMMERCE

FROM USDEL TO COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES (COFI)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, FAO

SUBJECT: REPORT OF 12TH SESSION OF COFI, ROME, 12-16 JUNE 1978

SUMMARY: COFI HELD 12TH SESSION IN ROME 12-16 JULY 1978. SESSION
ATTENDED BY APPROXIMATELY 74 MEMBERS AND USSR AS OBSERVER. ALSO
REPRESENTATIVES FROM HOLY SEE, UN, UNDP, EC, IOC, WMO, IUCN AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. MAJOR ISSUES WERE PROGRAM FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES IN ECONOMIC ZONES, FUTURE OF FAO REGIONAL
BODIES, FUTURE OF COFI, AND LIVING RESOURCES OF SOUTHERN OCEANS.
MEETING WAS ESSENTIALLY NON-CONTROVERSIAL AND U.S. INTERESTS
PROTECTED. END SUMMARY

1. COFI OPENED BY DR.MARIO RUIVO OF PORTUGAL AS CHAIRMAN OF COFI.
DR. RALPH PHILLIPS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FAO, WELCOMED THE
DELEGATES. AGENDA APPROVED AS DRAFTED.

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2. PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES IN ECONOMIC ZONES.
COFI NOTED THAT FAO HAS ALREADY GIVEN ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES IN ASSESSING RESOURCE POTENTIALS, WORKING OUT
POLICY AND ACTION PLANS, AND ASSISTING THEM IN GETTING
DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND IN EXECUTION OF THEIR PROGRAMS.
MANY DELEGATES EXPRESSED VIEW THAT FAO FISHERIES PROGRAM
PRESENTED NEEDED TO BE FORMULATED MORE PRECISELY, WITH CLEARER

OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES; ALSO, THAT THE PROGRAM BE STRENGTHENED, GIVEN A HIGH PRIORITY AND SENSE OF URGENCY, AND BE TAILORED TO NEEDS OF PARTICULAR COUNTRIES. COOPERATION BETWEEN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SHOULD BE FOSTERED. A FEW DELEGATIONS STATED THAT DEVELOPING STATES WHICH ARE DISADVANTAGED SHOULD ALSO BENEFIT FROM FISHERIES PROGRAM. SOME DELEGATES AFFIRMED THEIR COUNTRY'S OR ORGANIZATION'S DESIRE TO EXTEND FINANCIAL OR TECHNICAL AID FOR DEVELOPING FISHERIES, AND OTHERS WISHED TO SEE A SPECIAL FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT FUND ESTABLISHED, PERHAPS THROUGH UNDP. A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL WORKING GROUP OR SUB-COMMITTEE OF COFI WAS MADE TO HELP DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THIS FAO PROGRAM AND TO REVIEW THE PROGRAM ON INTER-SESSIONAL PERIODS. COFI SHOULD REVIEW THE CAPACITY OF AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO FAO TO UNDERTAKE THE ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM WHEN IT CONSIDERS THE PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET AT ITS NEXT SESSION.

3. FUTURE OF FAO REGIONAL BODIES. COFI FOCUSED ON PRACTICAL STEPS LEADING TO DECENTRALIZATION TO REGIONAL BODIES, AS DECISION TO DECENTRALIZE ALREADY AN APPROVED POLICY EXPRESSED BY LAST FAO CONFERENCE. SEVERAL DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING USA, URGED CAUTION IN IMPLEMENTATION, AND THAT PROCESS SHOULD BE GRADUAL. MANY DELEGATIONS EXPRESSED VIEW THAT TECHNICAL STAFF AND RESOURCES BE TRANSFERRED TO REGIONAL BODIES, NOT JUST ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF. USA AND OTHERS URGED THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRONG TECHNICAL CAPACITY AND COORDINATING AND ADVISORY ROLES FOR FAO BE MAINTAINED. FUNDING OF DECENTRALIZED BODIES REMAINS A MAJOR PROBLEM, WITH OPINION DIVIDED OVER FUNDING FROM REGULAR FAO BUDGET OR SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBER STATES OR THE REGIONAL BODIES OR DONOR AGENCIES. US SHOULD MONITOR CLOSELY, AS DECENTRALIZATION WILL COST MORE THAN CURRENT SYSTEM IN FAO REGIONAL BODIES. ESTIMATES OF THIS ADDITIONAL COST RANGE UP TO 3 TO 6 MILLION DOLLARS. MOST DELEGATES STRESSED NEED FOR COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES OF ALL UN BODIES CONCERNED WITH MARINE AFFAIRS AT REGIONAL LEVEL, INCLUDING CO-LOCATING THEM AT SAME SITE WHERE PRACTICABLE. EEC REPRESENTATIVE FARRELL RAISED PROBLEM ALREADY MENTIONED IN THE WECAFC REPORT OF THE 2ND SESSION HELD IN PANAMA IN MAY 1978, OF THE STATUS OF THE EEC WITHIN CERTAIN FAO FISHERY BODIES NOW THAT THE MEMBER STATES OF THE COMMUNITY HAD DELEGATED THEIR COMPETENCE IN CERTAIN FISHERIES MATTERS TO THE COMMUNITY. THE EEC REQUESTED THE MATTER BE BROUGHT TO FAO COUNCIL FOR A SOLUTION.

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4. FUTURE OF COFI. THE COMMITTEE AGREED THAT COFI SHOULD REMAIN AN ARTICLE 5 BODY AND THAT IT HAD SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT ITS DUTIES. IT REEMPHASIZED ITS BELIEF THAT COFI SHOULD MEET ANNUALLY AT LEAST FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THE COMMITTEE ALSO AGREED THAT THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EXISTING SUBCOMMITTEE SHOULD BE MODIFIED TO PROVIDE FOR ASSISTANCE IN FORMULATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO ASSIST LDC'S IN MANAGING FISHERY RESOURCES IN THEIR ECONOMIC ZONES.

5. LIVING RESOURCES OF THE SOUTHERN OCEANS. TOPIC INTRODUCED BY FAO'S ADG FISHERIES H. WATZINGER, REFERRING TO RESULTS OF FAO/UNDP PROJECT RECENTLY COMPLETED, INCREASING PACE OF HARVESTING AND TECHNOLOGY OF PROCESSING KRILL, AVAILABILITY OF FAO KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE IN SOUTHERN OCEANS, AND WELCOMED MOVES BY ANTARCTIC TREATY POWERS TO RATIONALLY MANAGE LIVING RESOURCES OF SOUTHERN OCEANS. FAO SECRETARIAT REPORTED THAT SCAR/SCOR, SPONSORS OF THE BIOMASS PROGRAM, HAD RECENTLY INVITED ACMRR TO BECOME FULL CO-SPONSOR OF BIOMASS PROGRAM AT KIEL MEETING, AND THAT ACMRR HAD

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ACCEPTED. AMBASSADOR KEITH BRENNAN OF AUSTRALIA REVIEWED RECENT HISTORY OF EVENTS LEADING TOWARDS ESTABLISHMENT OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT REGIME FOR LIVING RESOURCES OF SOUTHERN

OCEANS BY ANTARCTIC TREATY POWERS, EMPHASIZING THAT IT WAS NOT A FISHERY AGREEMENT IN THE USUAL SENSE BUT A BROAD CONVENTION FOR CONSERVATION OF THE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE ANTARCTIC ECOSYSTEM. BRENNAN CONVEYED INVITATION TO FAO STAFF TO HAVE AN FAO EXPERT ON SOUTHERN OCEANS AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATIONS AT NEXT ANTARTIC SESSION IN BUENOS AIRES IN JULY 1978. DELEGATES EXPRESSED GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT FAO HAD ROLE TO PLAY IN FACILITATING EXCHANGE AND EVALUATION OF STATISTICS AND DATA FOR SOUTHERN OCEANS, URGED CAUTION IN HARVESING, AND ENDORSED NEW ROLE FOR ACMRR. USSR OBSERVER NOTED DIFFICULTY OF DOING RESEARCH IN HARSH ANTARCTIC ENVIRONMENT, AND MADE CONSTRUCTIVE STATEMENT REGARDING INTENT OF USSR TO MAKE ITS SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS AND OTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE. KOREA INDICATED INTENT TO SEND RESEARCH VESSEL TO ANTARCTIC NEXT SEASON AND INTENT TO FISH KRILL. JAPAN INDICATED ITS FEELS A HARVESTABLE STOCK OF 100 MILLION TONS OF KRILL EXISTS, THAT KRILL SHOULD BE EXPLOITED FOR HUMAN FOOD, AND THAT JAPAN CAUGHT 26 THOUSAND TONS OF KRILL THIS SEASON. OBSERVER FROM IUCN OFFERED TO COLLABORATE WITH FAO AND DO A BRIEF FOR BUENOS AIRES MEETING. GENERAL SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED FAO SPECIAL STUDIES ALSO EXPRESSED.

6. PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET. COFI FELT IT SHOULD IN FUTURE REVERT TO PREVIOUS PRACTICE OF STUDYING PROGRAM IN DETAIL, LOOKING AT PROPOSED PROGRAM ONE YEAR AND IMPLEMENTATION IN ALTERNATE YEAR. FULL REVIEW 1989-81 BUDGET NOT POSSIBLE UNDER PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR NEXT COFI.

7. TIME OF NEXT MEETING. THE NEXT SESSION WILL BE HELD IN 1979, THE DATE TO BE SET LATER.
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8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS. MARIO RUIVO (PORTUGAL) RE-ELECTED CHAIRMAN AMID ACCLAIM FOR FINE JOB DONE THIS SESSION. N. ODERO (KENYA) ELECTED FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN. OTHER VICE-CHAIRMAN CUBA, POLAND, AUSTRALIA, KOREA. GARDNER

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